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Summary Report of the 5th International Symposium on Geospatial Health, held in Cartagena, Colombia, 30 September - 2 October 2011

The 5th International Symposium on Geospatial Health was held in Cartagena built for protection during the colonizing-buccaneer days of the Caribbean. The theme for the symposium was “Mapping and Modeling Neglected Tropical Diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean” and talks on that theme were given by six invited plenary speakers in addition to submitted papers by regular and student members. This year’s meeting continued an annual meeting series begun in Lijiang, People’s Republic of China (2007), followed up in New Orleans, USA (2008), Vietri sul Mare, Italy (2009) and Melbourne, Australia (2010). It was held immediately after the Federation of Latin American Parasitologists (FLAP) meeting at the University of the Andes in Bogota, (27 September - 1 October 2011) where members of the Global Network for Geospatial Health (GnosisGIS) Laura Rinaldi, Prixia Nieto, Penelope Vounatsou and Jack Malone presented invited talks at special session on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Latin America.

The 5th Symposium aimed to bring together geospatial health scientists from Latin America with scientists from elsewhere in the world to promote exchange of ideas and future co-operation through GnosisGIS. The meeting attracted over 30 scientists from Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, Italy, Peru, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad-Tobago, USA and Venezuela. Following an introduction by Professor Thomas K. Kristensen, President of GnosisGIS, 29 research presentations were given, including six keynote presentations from Jeff Luvall, NASA, Huntsville, AL; Josh Colston, Interamerican Development Bank, Washington DC; Lee Willingham, WHO/TDR, Geneva; Santiago Mas Coma, Valencia, Spain; Des Foley, Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC and Madeleine Thomson, International Research Institute for climate and Society, Colombia University, New York. The programme was organized into four sessions, including a graduate student session. Following the tradition of previous years, based on quality of abstracts submitted, need and geographic balance, student travel awards were presented to Natalia Valencia (Colombia); David Soeiro Barbosa (Brazil) and Maria Cecelia Vega (Trinidad-Tobago).

The 2011 programme included a workshop with the objective to plan ways and means for GnosisGIS mem-

bers to cooperate in a working group on open access to results of mapping and modeling efforts on NTDs in Latin America. The scientific programme was followed by the annual business meeting and it was decided that the next GnosisGIS meeting will be held in Cluj, Romania in conjunction with the meetings of the European Multicolloquium of Parasitology (EMOP) from 25 to 29 July 2012.

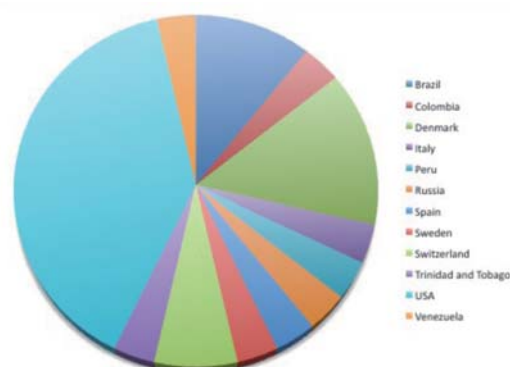


Fig. 1. The distribution of participants at the 5th International Symposium on Geospatial Health in Cartagena (Colombia), 30 September - 2 October, 2011.



Fig. 2. Thomas K. Kristensen and Jack Malone, GnosisGIS President and Past-President, with the recipients of the Student Travel Awards: Maria Cecilia Vega, Natalia Valencia and David Soeiro Barbosa.



Fig. 3. Attendees at the 5th Symposium on Geospatial Health, Cartagena (Colombia), 30 September - 2 October, 2011.